

Portal development team work together to define what data is needed from the PCR data store and enable the application to extract that data.

[0115] The host application administrator must first provide the Supplier Portal development team with a list of application specifics that will be needed by the application. The Supplier Portal developers then add these specifics to the Supplier Portal design, storing them in the database schema. Once stored in the PCR data store 46, the application owner can extract the data needed using an appropriate interface tool and store it in the local repository, if any. If there is no local repository, an application can build a read only interface and link to the PCR data store 46 to obtain information needed for use in the application.

[0116] Certain administrators, coordinators and select others can use a read only query to extract private data from the PCR data store 46. These individuals will also have the ability to update the data store 46.

[0117] Each application under the Supplier Portal 40 may continue to maintain within the application its own local repository for application-specific profile data. The application owner needs to modify the application to point to PCR's data store 46 and extract the appropriate application-specific data needed to prefill the existing local repository database. The application developers must build an agent to pull application-specific data from the PCR data store 46 to synchronize the local data with the PCR data store data.

[0118] Application-specific profile data for an application not retaining its own local repository will be stored solely in the PCR data store 46. Adequate control of access to the application will require real time communication between the application and the PCR data store 46. Therefore, application developers must use an appropriate database interface to create a read only query to pull data from the PCR data store 46 as frequently as possible.

[0119] While the invention has been described in terms of a single preferred embodiment, those skilled in the art will recognize that the invention can be practiced with modification within the spirit and scope of the appended claims.

Having thus described our invention, what we claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent is as follows:

1. A process for managing business, technical and operational data which uses a single interface in a shared space environment over the Internet comprising the steps of:

providing a supplier portal from which new guests indicate, using a Graphical User Interface (GUI) of the supplier portal Web page, whether they are a registered user or not;

determining whether a guest is a registered user from input by the guest, and if not a registered user, prompting the guest to select "Register" to link to guest registration (GR) where they can obtain a Web userid/password that enables them to register for any of global procurement applications available under the supplier portal;

when a guest obtains a Web userid/password in GR, storing guest information in a GR data store;

determining whether any applications have been authorized for a registered guest and, if not, prompting the

guest to register for restricted applications in a portal common registration (PCR) where information is stored in a PCR data store throughout an application's approval cycle;

accessing information from the GR data store to automatically build a customized home page for the guest, this home page being modified and updated as the guest's requests for access to applications get approved;

determining whether approval is needed for a requested application and, if so, sending a request for approval to the application administrator and receiving a response from the application administrator; and

storing links to all applications for which the guest is approved, these links being reflected in the personalized supplier portal home page which displays a list of links to all of the applications for which the guest has been registered and authorized.

2. The process for managing business, technical and operational data as recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

defining 1 to n level approval cycles a user must go through to get authorized to access an application;

logging in by a registered guest by inputting the guest's userid/password once for each session, as long as applications requested by the guest are in a same realm; and

invoking by a logged in guest any of their approved applications by simply clicking the link to the desired application in the guest's customized home page.

3. The process for managing business, technical and operational data as recited in claim 2, wherein the approval cycles are customizable for each application.

4. The process for managing business, technical and operational data as recited in claim 2, wherein the approval cycles are defined for a section of an application, providing a finer level of access control.

5. The process for managing business, technical and operational data as recited in claim 2, wherein application specific registration fields are defined so that a registration form, unique to an application, is displayed when a user requests access to an application.

6. The process for managing business, technical and operational data as recited in claim 2, wherein guests may bookmark applications for later access, further comprising the step of prompting by an application a guest to enter their userid/password for authentication against data stored in the GR data store when the application is accessed using a bookmark.

7. A data processing system for managing business, technical and operational data which uses a single interface in a shared space environment over the Internet comprising:

a supplier portal from which new guests indicate, using a Graphical User Interface (GUI) of the supplier portal Web page, whether they are a registered user or not;

means for determining whether a guest is a registered user from input by the guest, and if not a registered user, prompting the guest to select "Register" to link to guest registration (GR) where they can obtain a Web userid/